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ECCLESIASTES AND THEOGNIS

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Can we find in the Book of Ecclesiastes any traces of Greek language and thought? Some scholars answer in the affirmative: Pfeleiderer believes that Koheleth shows dependence upon Heraclitus; while Tyler, Plumptre, Haupt, Siegfried find what seem to them unmistakable traces of Stoic and Epicurean philosophy. Others (Driver, Peake, Wellhausen, Currie Martin) think that while he never adopted the tenets of any particular school of thought, he was nevertheless influenced by his knowledge of contemporary Greek philosophy. Still others (Jülicher, A. B. Davidson, Cheyne, Barton, McNeile, D. S. Margoliouth) answer in the negative: Koheleth was "a native Hebrew philosopher," everything in his book can be accounted for as a natural development of the native Hebrew wisdom. There is thus wide difference of opinion.

It is well remarked, however, by Montefiore¹ and Toy² that Koheleth is within the Bible "an isolated thinker." Cheyne³ says that "his work is without a model," and there is certainly a difference between his book and the others which seems more than a difference in tone. True, he does not altogether abandon the Jewish standpoint, but his is not the native Hebrew spirit. No wonder many of the Jews, the most optimistic people in history, did not like his book and that the author of the Book of Wisdom set himself to contradict him.

To the present writer, Koheleth compels comparison with the Greek elegiac poet Theognis (*ca.* 540 B.C.). The writings of both consist of opinions and meditations upon human life and society which seem anything but coherently and systematically arranged. The connections are loose and disjointed; the arguments are little developed; subjects change with startling abruptness; and the opinions expressed appear at times inconsistent. To account for

¹ *Hibbert Lectures*, 1892, p. 399.

² *Enc. Biblica*, p. 5335.

³ *Job and Solomon*, p. 203.

these similar characteristics, critics have framed similar theories: the material in the books as they stand at present has in some way become dislocated; or there has been wholesale interpolation of the original texts; or the present books have been built up by several hands; or they are simply collections of the opinions of various sages strung together with little or no coherence or plan; while others adopt the very probable view¹ that the books as we have them at present are substantially the same as when they left the hand of Koheleth and Theognis.

There is no reason for excluding Theognis (*ca.* 540 B.C.) as a possible source for ideas in Koheleth (*ca.* 200 B.C.). From the fourth century B.C. onward there must have been many Jewish scholars who were well acquainted with Greek thought and it is worth noting that Ben Sira who clearly borrows from Koheleth and whose book was written only some twenty to thirty years later is generally admitted to have been affected by Greek culture. Further, the influence of Theognis was widespread. Isocrates (436-338 B.C.) tells us² that in his day Theognis along with Hesiod and Phokylides were admitted to be the best teachers of practical morality. For long he was the outstanding Greek moralist; the rising generations were taught his precepts, "he was a standard author in Attic schools."³ He is quoted in the classical period by Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle among others, and both Aeschylus and Sophocles were indebted to him. He was a force in Greece whose influence upon the practical life of the people can hardly be overestimated.

If then Koheleth knew Greek literature at all, he is likely to have been acquainted with the writing of Theognis and, further, the very nature of its contents must have made it specially attractive to him. Comparison of the two books has compelled the present writer to adopt the theory that Koheleth knew Theognis and again and again echoed him in his own work. There are similarities of thought and expression which on this view are most easily explained.

In Theognis the complete dependence of man upon the gods is a common theme. "No one is himself the cause of loss and gain; the

¹ See Hastings, *DB*, I, 639 for "Koheleth"; Harrison, *Studies in Theognis*; Allen, *Classical Review*, XIX, for Theognis.

² Προς Νικοκλέα ii. 43.

³ Jebb, *Greek Literature*, p. 54.

gods are the givers of both" (133 f.); "No man is happy or poor or bad or good apart from divine agency" (165 f.); "Without the gods nought happens to man, neither good nor evil" (171 f.; cf. 336 f., 444 f., 589 ff.).

Koheleth also believes that all the events of human life are in the hands of God. Of course, this is a fundamental Old Testament idea; to the Hebrew mind God and Providence were equivalent notions. Still, he reminds us of Theognis. All the good in life (2:24 ff.; 3:13; 5:18 f.; 9:7) as well as the evil (1:13; 2:26; 3:10; 6:2) is the gift of God; His hand is in all that happens (cf. 7:13 f.; 9:1 f.; 11:5, etc.). Once, however, Theognis turns from God to man; the Immortals were not to blame for his misfortunes, they rather originated in the violence of men (833 f.). Koheleth, too, speaks of man's oppression of man (4:1 f.), but he regarded it as the ordination of God. Both stress the thought that no man is master of his own life. He lies helpless in the unyielding grip of Divine law whose iron bands he cannot break: "'Tis impossible for mortals to fight against the Immortals" (T. 687). "He [man] is not able to contend with Him that is mightier than he" (Eccles. 6:10; cf. T. 727 f., 817, 1033 f., 1187 f.; Eccles. 7:13; 8:8; 9:1 f.). We need not wonder that this conviction that all was fixed by God should induce in both the exhortation: *Carpe diem*, "get as much enjoyment as possible out of the passing hour."

Koheleth, too, is oppressed by the thought of man's ignorance of the future and his inability to understand God's world or to grasp the meaning of His work: "He has put ignorance¹ in man's heart, so that he cannot find out the work that God does from beginning to end" (3:11); "For who knows what is good for man in life, the number of the days of his vain life, for he spends them like a shadow; for who shall tell man what shall be after him under the sun" (6:12); and the thought in 1:2-11 is that men are ignorant of the experiences of those that have gone before. Cf. also 7:24; 8:17; 9:1; 11:5. In 7:14 Koheleth tells us that good and evil are so mixed by God that man can find nothing out concerning the future. Cf. 8:7; 9:12; 10:14. Theognis also, is oppressed by man's ignorance and intellectual limitations. He, too, charges God with withholding the

¹ Read with Barton and others עִלְמוֹת instead of the difficult עִלְמוֹת. Coverdale also translates "ignorance."

knowledge necessary for man to order his life well, and feels keenly human inability to penetrate the divine plan. "Nothing is defined by God for mortals nor the road in which a man must go to please the Immortals" (381 f.); "No man toils, knowing within his heart whether the issue be good or ill . . . our thoughts are vain, we know nothing; the gods accomplished all things according to their own mind" (135 ff.); "No one knows, when a matter begins, where he is likely to land" (585 f.). "'Tis most difficult to know the end of a matter unaccomplished, how God will bring it to pass. Gloom is spread over it; before the future comes to pass the issues of helplessness are not intelligible to mortals" (1075 f.; cf. 160.)

Both, as the result of their survey of the world, conclude that God treats wicked and righteous alike, or even bestows prosperity on the former and adversity on the latter: "How then, son of Cronus, dost thou think fit to deal out the same portion to wicked and just, whether their minds are turned towards moderation or insolence" (377 f.); "The unrighteous and wicked man, shunning the wrath neither of man nor the Immortals waxes wanton and is gluttoned with wealth, whereas the righteous are worn out, distressed by sore poverty" (749 ff., 589 f.). In similar strain we have *Koheleth*: The same fate happens to wise and fool, righteous and wicked; the former have no advantage over the latter (2:14-16; 9:2 f.). Wickedness is rewarded with power (3:16; 4:1; 8:10); rewards in this life are not bestowed in accordance with ability or merit (9:11); nay, more, a righteous man perishes in his righteousness while a wicked man prolongs life in his evil-doing (7:15); "there are righteous men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and there are wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous" (8:14). And *Koheleth* laments that those things increase the evil and madness of the human heart (9:3) while *Theognis* asks, in view of such Divine dealings, how can anyone reverence the gods? (747 f.; cf. 279.)

In their references to retribution, however, *Theognis* and *Koheleth* are somewhat inconsistent, for both elsewhere teach that impiety is actually punished on earth. This need cause no surprise, since we all know how our own moods change and contradictory ideas find place within us. Wrongdoing may seem successful for a time; but

sooner or later it issues in destruction (T. 199 ff.; cf. 143 f., 328, 330, 1170; Eccles. 2:26; 5:6; 5:8; 7:17, 26; 8:13; 10:8 f.). Theognis dwells more on the punishment of sin than on the reward of virtue, while Koheleth gives both sides due expression. Cf. further 7:12; 8:5, 12; 11:1, 2. Both mention, further, that God apparently delays in dealing out justice and that this tardiness leads men to imagine they can transgress with impunity, since a wicked man may, at the time, seem to gain by his wickedness. The minds of men are deceived "for not at the very time of the act itself do the gods take vengeance on sin" (T. 203 ff.; cf. 279 f.); "Because sentence against an evil deed is not accomplished quickly, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccles. 8:11). Eccles. 5:8 is worthy of special note: "If thou seest the oppression of the poor and the wresting of justice and right in a province, marvel not¹ at the matter for high one above high one is watching—and the Most High over them."² Plumptre finds here a distinct echo of the Greek *μηθὲν θαυμάζειν*. It is worth mentioning that Theognis uses the same phrase: "Marvel not³ that the race of citizens is obscured, for noble is mixed with base" (191 f.). In the latter part of the verse we have a much-discussed passage, where *גְּבוּרִים* is taken as a plural *majestatis*⁴ referring to God who in the end punishes wrongdoing. High officer may oppress lower officer but there is One higher than all who will in the end see that justice is done. It is interesting to compare Theognis 199 ff.: Wickedness may seem to prosper and at the time appear successful, but "in the end there is ill; for the mind of the gods is wont to be superior."⁵ The peculiar phraseology was probably suggested by these last words in Theognis. High official squeezes petty official—no marvel that, and then almost as an afterthought Koheleth adds "Yea [*vaw* intensive] there is the Most High above these." He is The Superior Officer.

Neither in Theognis nor Koheleth do we find belief in any retribution or redress beyond this life. The former speaks of the man whom the justice of the Immortals does not overtake because

¹ Septuagint *μη θαυμάσης*.

² כִּי גְבוּרָה מֵעַל גְּבוּרָה שׁוֹמֵר וְגְבוּרִים עֲלֵיהֶם

³ *μη θαύμαζε*.

⁴ So Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Lexicon*; Zöckler; Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Grammar*, etc.

⁵ *ὑπερέχω*, lit. "to be above."

death came beforehand (207). At death all that was worth calling life was at an end. The place of the dead—good and bad alike—was in the “much lamenting homes of Hades” (244), “the shadowy place of the dead whose dark portals confine the souls of the dead against their will” (708 ff.), when a man dies he “lies long beneath the ground like a voiceless stone” and though he “be a man of worth he shall see nothing any more” (567 ff.). All the delights of life are absent (973 ff., 1191 ff.); man becomes dust; “Soon there will be some other men, and I, when dead, shall be black earth” (877 f., 1070a, b). In the same way Koheleth denies a future life in any real sense of the word. He has no faith in anything beyond death.¹ At this time the doctrine of immortality was gaining ground among the Jews and it is probable that Koheleth meant to definitely reject this growing belief. “Certainly his affirmations of the emptiness of the future life are many and pointed and they stand, by their dispassionateness, in marked contrast with the passionate hopelessness of Job.”² The wise man dies as the fool, there is no remembrance of them forever (2:16). Death reduces good and bad to one level irrespective of moral distinctions (9:2); man is no better than the beasts, both go to the same place, both are of the earth and return to earth (3:19 ff.). “The dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward” (9:5), in the shadow world of Sheol “there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom” (9:10). At death the personality is dissolved into its original sources—earth to earth and the breath of life to its giver (12:7). Death undoes what the creative act of God had accomplished.³

Further, as they notice all the anomalies of Divine Justice both come to the conclusion that God is not a Righteous Being. Theognis expostulates with Zeus for treating good and bad alike and for dealing with the innocent as if they were guilty and the wicked as if they were righteous, and bitterly asks how such conduct can be just (743, 373 ff.). It is a blot upon God’s righteousness that he deliberately withholds the knowledge of how to act so as to please Him (381 f., 135 ff.) and sometimes even a Divine spirit leads man astray (404). God is a harsh Omnipotence against whom mortals are

¹ Most scholars regard 3:17; 11:9c; and 12:14 as editorial additions.

² Toy, *Enc. Biblica*, col. 5335. See also col. 1158.

³ See Barton in *ICC*, also *DB*, I, 639–40; V, 731b.

unable to strive (687 f.). But reflection did not lead him to atheism as in the case of Diagoras of Melos;¹ he never doubts the reality of God; he advises Cynrus to "reverence and fear the gods" (1179). Neither was Koheleth tempted to deny his theistic faith; as a Jew it could hardly have been otherwise. Sometimes, indeed, he does seem to have acknowledged a moral order in the world (3:11, 14; 8:12, 17), but nevertheless, while he never goes so far as to directly challenge the Divine Justice, he does calmly assume the universal crookedness of things, that the moral government of the world is not righteous. True, he is God-fearing and exhorts his readers to be the same (5:1, 7; 7:18; 8:12; 12:1, etc.), but it is well said that his fear is "pale and cheerless." He regards God's rule as arbitrary (2:26). He stands aloof from the life of men (5:2). His references to the anomalies of Providence have behind them a tacit charge of injustice against God. Like Theognis, it seems harsh to him that while there may be a Divine plan for man, God has deliberately chosen to veil his wisdom so that he cannot discover it; he neither knows what is good nor how to order his life; all human undertakings are thus uncertain and chanceful. Man is helpless in the grip of an Austere Being who has doomed him to ignorance.

As Theognis reflects on the Divine dealings he cannot keep back his feelings of resentment and, although once he does admit that God could never please everyone (804), he is unable to conceal his indignation. "Dear Zeus, I am amazed at thee" (373). "What other mortal, as he looks upon this man [i.e., the just sufferer] would reverence the gods" (747). Koheleth, however, never directly gives voice to indignation at God's ways; but it is there, lying very close to the surface of his book.² His belief in God is cold and almost entirely lacking in religious content. At heart he is more Greek than Jew; he is merely a thinker with nothing of that passionate hold upon God in spite of all perplexities, which is so characteristic of the Hebrew saint.

The references to chance in Theognis are most interesting. "Pray to be foremost neither in excellence nor wealth, but simply let there be luck [τύχη] to a man" (129 f.). But this good luck is

¹ See *Enc. of Religion and Ethics*, II, 184.

² Cf. 2:15 ff., 21; 3:10; 4:3; 5:13-16; 6:1, 8; 8:14; 9:3; 10:5, etc.

the gift of God (134 f.), for often even when a man does ill (read *κακῶς*), heaven gives him in everything good fortune, and he prospers, freed from the consequences of his folly (589 f. adapted from Solon. Cf. 165-66). Therefore the one thing essential is to gain the Divine favor: "May I be fortunate and dear to the immortal gods; then I am eager for no other excellence" (653 f.; cf. 1119 f.).

In Koheleth we have the same idea that events seem to happen by chance. Success is not given where ability and merit are present, "but time and chance happeneth to them all" (9:11). But neither does he look upon the world as the sport of blind chance; for all the events of human life are wholly dependent upon the Divine Will. If men do well it is God who prospers them (2:24; 3:13; 5:19; 7:14; 9:1). It should be noted that both Eccles. 9:11 and Theognis 129 f. are followed by the statement of man's ignorance of the future (9:12 and 135 f.). Eccles. 9:11 merits further attention: "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." The passage Amos 2:14 f. should be remembered, but then again we have Theognis 129 f. just quoted and also "Some toil with good counsel and ill-luck and success does not follow their works" (163 f.; cf. 639 f.). God bestows wealth upon the useless (149, 321, 865); with His aid even the slow man "hath caught the swift in the pursuit" (329 f.); while in 662 ff. he complains that poor man suddenly becomes rich and rich man poor and "wise man fails and glory oft attends the senseless and honour even a base man obtains." The fragment of Pindar preserved by Aristides is also worthy of mention: "In battle it is chance that wins, not strength."¹

In view of the passages already quoted it is not surprising that both Jew and Greek were pessimists. The ills of men are various, "no one of men whom the sun looks upon is happy" (T. 167 f.; cf. 441, 1014 ff., 373 ff.). "Reverence hath perished; shamelessness and insolence have mastered justice and hold the whole earth" (T. 291 f., 647, 1135 ff.). In Koheleth, mark the ever-recurring "Vanity," "Vanity of Vanities," "All is vanity," as well as the pessimistic references everywhere to the emptiness of life. The book has

¹ ἐν ἔργμασιν δὲ νικᾷ τύχη οὐ σθένος.

been called "a Catechism of pessimism." But his pessimism is somewhat different from that of Theognis. The latter was mostly occupied with himself, with his own troubles and those of his party,¹ while Koheleth's outlook was wider. He looked beyond himself and his people and habitually contemplated humanity at large and, further, while life was really bad, he did not regard the world as growing worse (7:10). Still, it must be confessed that his pessimism is very un-Hebraic: "a work like Ecclesiastes is a portent in the Old Testament, and alien to the spirit of true Judaism."²

The weariness of life leads both writers to long for death. "Of all things not to be born is best, nor to see the beams of the sun; but when born, as swiftly as may be to pass the gates of Hades and lie under a heavy heap of earth" (T. 425 ff.; cf. 1069). It is a common Greek thought.³ To Koheleth also life was hateful (2:17), the deathday was better than the birthday⁴ (7:1); "And I congratulated the dead who have already died more than the living who are yet alive, and (I regarded) as happier than both of them him who had never been born, who has not seen the evil work which is done under the sun" (4:2 f.; cf. Job 3:2 ff.; and Jer. 20:14-18). But Koheleth's pessimism was limited; it was only the man whose soul was not filled with good to whom nonexistence was better than life (6:3), and in the same strain we have Theognis: "May I die unless I find some cessation from evil cares" (343 f.); "Death is better than grinding poverty" (181 f.; cf. 820, 1121 f.). But while they could *write* that life was hateful, they, nevertheless, shrank from actual death, "A living dog is better than a dead lion" (Eccles. 9:4), and since in death there is no enjoyment, Theognis "will feel well at heart so long as without trembling he keeps light limbs and head" (977). Both alike had the deepest horror of death and the old age which is the prelude to death, and with wondrous inconsistency found life really worth living. Neither was, in spite of 4:2 f. and 425-28, after all, weary of life. "God hath made everything beautiful

¹ Cf. 173 f., 271 f., 289, 343 f., 619, 667, 1197, etc.

² Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 251.

³ Sophocles *Oed. Col.* 1225 ff., Euripides *Fragment* 287; Bacchylides v. 160-61; Palladas, Posidippus, etc.

⁴ Strangely like the Orphic reference in Herodotus v. 4. Plumptre quotes also Euripides *Fragment* 452.

in its season" (3:11). "Truly the light is sweet and it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun" (11:7).

Inasmuch as they were convinced that human life is a misery, bound as it is by iron law, both Theognis and Koheleth take as their motto: Get all the joy out of life that comes your way. Koheleth writes that "a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat and drink and enjoy himself" (8:15); "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and make his soul enjoy good in his labour" (2:24; cf. 3:12, 22; 5:18 f.; 8:15; 9:7; 11:9 ff.). Theognis counsels the young man to enjoy himself as long as he is able (1007 ff.), to drink and rejoice (1047) and to set the mind on festivities (983; cf. 567 f., 761 ff., 877, 1063 ff., 1070a, b, 1119 ff., 1192, etc.); and behind the advice of Eccles. 11:9—"gratify thy desires"—is the same thought as in Theognis 256: "Most delightful of all is it to gain what one desires." Koheleth, however, strikes a higher note than Theognis. He was no mere sensualist; he never counsels debauchery (7:25, 6). His conception of God, cold as it was, kept him from that. He nowhere recommends riot and excess but he has in mind rather the enjoyment of the simpler pleasures of life in moderation (9:7-10).¹ Eccles. 5:18 is worthy of further note. "Behold that which I have seen—a good thing which is beautiful is it to eat and drink," etc. Plumptre, Wildeboer, Siegfried, and others take the strange אֲשֶׁר־רָפָה טוֹב as a translation of the well-known *καλὸν ἀγαθόν*. Barton and others point to Hos. 12:9 as a Hebrew parallel, but this is doubtful.² It may, however, have been suggested by a phrase in a passage which Theognis adapted from Mimnermus (1019): *τερπνὸν ὁμῶς καὶ καλόν*. The poet regards as "agreeable and likewise beautiful" "the prime of his equals in age." He is lamenting the passing of youth and the coming of miserable old age, while in 5:18 Koheleth is stressing his motto—*Carpe diem*—which in 11:9 f. he again counsels for the very same reason as Theognis in this passage—the passing of youth and the coming of old age. What the

¹ Barton, however, in his commentary, pp. 39 and 162, quotes from a fragment of the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic which he thinks lies behind Eccles. 9:7-10.

² עוֹן אֲשֶׁר־חָטָא. Both Septuagint and Vulgate witness to a different text and commentators (Harper, Cheyne, etc.) read חָטָא. In Eccles. 5:18 the Targum, Syriac Version, Coverdale's Bible, Revised Version treat אֲשֶׁר as a copula and some scholars even alter the text to טוֹב וְרָפָה.

latter writes of the flower of youth, Koheleth writes of the pleasures which specially belong to youth: both are agreeable and fair (טוב = "pleasant, agreeable," as in 11:7).

In 1135 ff. Theognis complains of man's wickedness; oaths are forsworn; there is no reverence for the gods, "the race of pious folk is perished;" men are sensible neither of ordinances nor order, "but so long as a man lives and sees the light of the sun . . . let him wait on hope." There is reference to hope in Eccles. 9:3, 4: "the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after it to the dead! For whoever is joined to all the living there is hope" (for him), etc. There is a difference in the thought but the language is very similar.

Experience taught both that to err is human: "Faults attend mortals" (T. 327, 898, 1027); truly good men are rare; "one man out of a thousand I have found" (Eccles. 7:28); "Judgment and shame attend good men who are now really few among the many" (T. 635 f., 1185 f.). They go still farther and say that the really good are actually nonexistent. "The sun looks down upon no one living who is entirely good and virtuous" (T. 615; cf. 647 and 1141 f.); "Surely there is not a righteous man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccles. 7:20).

Both, too, are grieved to see the elevation to honor of the unworthy and the degradation of the noble: "Folly is set in high places often, but the rich [i.e., the nobles, the men of ancestral wealth] dwell in low estate. I have seen servants on horses, and princes, like servants, walking on the ground" (Eccles. 10:6 f.); "Porters rule, the vile have the upper-hand of the noble" (T. 679); "The base . . . are now ennobled and the nobles are now made base" (T. 57; cf. 515 f., 663 ff., 683 f., 893).

Koheleth's picture of old age is very dark without a single cheering feature such as we find elsewhere in the Old Testament.¹ Then are come the evil days and the years in which there is no pleasure. The dread of old age seems to have cast a shadow over life and in this he reminds us of the common Greek view, so characteristically expressed in Theognis, that when youth and strength wore away, all that made life worth living was gone. There was no pleasure, only pain,

¹ Cf. Prov. 16:31; 20:29; Ps. 92:14, etc.

in the thought of old age. His epithets for it are "baneful," "unsightly," "troublesome," "bad"¹ (272, 527, 768, 1011, 1021, 1132, also 1069). It is not surprising that he as well as Koheleth offers the advice: Make the most of youth, enjoy life while you can. "Let us give our dear spirits to festivals while they can still bear the delightful works of enjoyment" (983 f.) and in 1007 ff. he advises men as long as they have the bright bloom of youth to entertain sound thoughts in their hearts and to enjoy their possessions; for youth is not given twice and both death and old age—evil and baneful—are inevitable. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy prime and walk in the ways of thy heart and in the sight of thy eyes . . . and put away vexation from thy heart and remove misery from thy flesh; for youth and prime are vanity," i.e., transitory, fleeting (see whole passage in Eccles. 11:9—12:7).

In common with other Greek writers² Theognis regards adverse circumstances as having a demoralizing effect upon character (383 ff., 361, 535 f., 930, 1177); and so also in Eccles. 7:7, where the wise man is the oppressed rather than the oppressor, "For oppression makes a wise man foolish." Further, compare on the oath of God, Eccles. 8:2 with Theognis 823 f. "I (counsel thee) to observe the command [ἡτοίμα] of a king, and because of the oath of God"; "Extol not any tyrant in the hope of gain, nor slay him when you have covenanted by oaths sworn before the gods" (θεῶν ὄρκια συνθέμενος).

Again, Hitzig, Hengstenberg, Zöckler and others are probably correct in seeing a close connection between Eccles. 10:6-7 and the following verses. We have there a common idea of Theognis that when undue success attends a man it is but the prelude to ruin (153 f., 605 f., 693, 1175 f.).

In common with men in every age and clime, Theognis realizes the value of true friendship (77 f.; cf. also Eccles. 4:9-12), but both, again, smart under the bitter experience of false friends (Eccles. 7:28 and T. 73 f., 79 f., 87 f., 114 ff., and *passim*). Further, 121 f. seems to throw light on Eccles. 9:1: "If the mind of a friend within

¹ οὐλόμενος, ἄμορφος, ἀργαλέος, κακός.

² Homer *Odyssey* xvii. 322; xviii. 136 f.; Simonides iii. 5 ff.

his breast is secretly untrue, and his heart is treacherous; this is the falsest thing that God hath made for man, this the most distressing thing of all to know; for you cannot know the mind of man or woman before you have proved it . . . ; nor could you guess it . . . for often appearances deceive the judgment." Koheleth reads "the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hands of God, whether it be love or hatred man knoweth it not; all before them is vanity."¹ The meaning seems to be that man does not know whether the attitude of his fellows toward him is that of love or hatred. In both passages there is the recognition of the Divine sovereignty in human affairs. Theognis is here full of the thought that it is difficult to know the hearts of others, whether they cherish love or hatred, while in the two previous verses Koheleth is emphasizing the difficulty of understanding God's ways in the world, however much man may strive so to do, and then proceeds to say that whether He has provided love or hatred for men is beyond his knowledge—all is uncertain.

Theognis has much on the subject of ingratitude. The mean are unthankful, the noble only remember good deeds and show their gratitude in after-time (101-12, 333, 853 f.). But note 233-34: "Although he be citadel and tower to an empty-minded people a good man gets little share of honour." The influence of this passage may be traced in Eccles. 9:13-16 where Koheleth is giving an example illustrating the general principle taught by bitter experience to Theognis. In him as in Koheleth we have siege warfare; the poor (the "good" at this time were reduced to poverty) wise (as opposed to the "empty-minded") man who saves the city but goes unrewarded. Cheyne thinks that Koheleth may be referring to himself as the savior of the city.² This is likely—the sting of personal experience is in the passage as also in that of Theognis.

The ingratitude of his fellows compels the Greek to moralize further: "Let no man persuade thee to love a base man, for what help is he, though he be a friend? . . . 'Tis the vainest thanks one gets who benefits the mean, all one with sowing the waters of

¹ הַכֶּלֶל in vs. 2 is changed to הַקֶּלֶל and connected with vs. 1. So many scholars following versions of Symmachus, Vulgate, Septuagint, etc.

² *Job and Solomon*, p. 221.

the surging sea;¹ for neither by sowing the waters would you reap a thick crop, nor by benefiting the base would you secure benefit in return" (101 ff.; cf. 333, 955. But cf. 573). We have, too, the similar phrase in Phokylides 152.² Plumptre and Zöckler before him have pointed out the parallel here to Eccles. 11:1 f., "Cast thy bread on the face of the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." Koheleth has in mind the short-sighted exhortation of the Greek teacher and deliberately controverts it. "Be generous; do not be narrow in your liberality, even on the thankless waters scatter broadcast the seeds of kindness; be sure that sooner or later you will be rewarded." The sympathies of Koheleth were deeper and broader (3:16; 4:1; 7:2 f.), he had the sincerest compassion for the oppressed, his feeling for them helped to spoil his own happiness. The cruel sentiment in Theognis (1041; cf. 1217) was altogether alien from his spirit "Hither with the piper! let us laugh and drink beside him that weeps, the while delighting in his grief."

In another point Koheleth contradicts Theognis. The latter states that great deeds are rewarded by an immortality of fame (237 ff., 867), but he disputes this—death means oblivion; he denies even the immortality of remembrance (1:11; 2:16; 9:5-6).

Theognis, like other Greeks, ascribed the origin of sin to God; sin (ἔβρις) God presents to man as the first and greatest evil (151 ff., 133 f.). In 403 f. he refers to the man whom a Divine spirit leads astray into a great sin, making good to appear evil, and evil good. Further, though not quite consistently, as Plato pointed out long ago,³ he teaches that vice is innate (429 ff.). It follows that man is not himself responsible for his own sin. God is its primary author, the inborn evil as well as the impulse to sin comes from Him. Koheleth probably had Theognis in mind when he wrote 7:29. "God made man upright, but they have sought out many contrivances."⁴ He denies that God is the primary author of evil: men and women are born good; vice is not innate through any divine agency; God made men upright; sin is man's own doing.

¹ ἴσον καὶ σπείρειν πόντον ἀλὸς πολίης.

² μὴ κακὸν εὖ ἐρῆγης· σπείρειν ἴσον ἔστ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ.

³ Meno 95.

⁴ יָשָׁר "morally upright"; חֲשִׁבֹּן "evil artifices," "tricks."

The Greek moralist has much to say about the use and abuse of wine. It is both good and bad; good when used wisely and bad when used unwisely (475–510, 413, 837 ff., 873 ff., 971 f., 989). Compare such passages in Koheleth as 9:7; 10:17, 19, also 2:3; 2:24; 3:13; 5:18; 8:15.¹ Further, note ll. 211–12 repeated almost exactly in 509–10: “To drink much wine is bad; but if one drink it prudently² ’tis not bad but good.” This helps to elucidate Eccles. 2:3: “I searched out in my heart how to cheer my flesh with wine (and my heart was behaving itself with prudence) and to lay hold on folly,” etc.³ The phrase “and my heart,” etc., is a parenthesis explanatory of the previous words only. Though it is true that Koheleth “retained or tried to retain, his self-analyzing introspection even in the midst of his revelry” (Plumptre) this is hardly the point here; he is rather telling us that his use of the wine was wise and moderate. He did not plunge riotously into drunken excess. True, he experimented with wine to see what good he could get out of it, but he did this with the advice of Theognis in his mind and drank it wisely and prudently.

In Theognis 401–2 we read “Strive after nothing too much: in all the works of men the proper season is best.”⁴ Plumptre has called attention to the parallel in Eccles. 3:1–8: “For everything there is a fixed season and there is a time for every business under the sun: a time to be born and a time to die,” etc.; cf. also 8:6. It is likely that Koheleth is here expanding and applying the idea of Theognis. Every action has its proper time to which it is wise to adapt ourselves. But unfortunately, as both complain immediately after, who can be sure that he knows this proper time; man walks in the dark. Theognis follows up his statement that the proper season is best by another, that careful foresight may just as easily lead a man wrong as right, since, led astray by a Divine spirit, he mistakes good for evil and evil for good (403 ff.); while Koheleth continues his observations about the appropriate times for everything

¹ Cf. also Ps. 104:15; Prov. 31:6 f.; Sir. 31:25 ff.

² ἐπισταμένως.

³ ולבי נהג בהכמה. נהג = “behaving itself” as in New Hebrew; see Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Lexicon*, p. 624.

⁴ See also 723, 919; the lyric lines of Sodamus. Hesiod *Op.* 694 and cf. *Op.* 765 ff. with Koheleth’s times and seasons.

with the remark that God has put ignorance in man's heart so that he cannot discover His plan in the world (cf. 6:12; T. 381, 135, 1075 f.).

Koheleth writes very strangely in 7:16-18: "Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise. . . . Be not overmuch wicked, nor be a fool; why shouldest thou die before thy time? It is good that thou take hold of this, and that thou refrain not thy hand from that; for he that feareth God goes along with both"—he does not exceed the just medium, but strives to keep to the middle course.¹ Clearly we are in a Greek atmosphere here. The words are not ironical but perfectly serious; you may sin to a moderate degree as long as there is no excess; avoid all extremes in folly or wisdom, piety or sin; give a share to all, but ever take the middle course. This is surely not the native Hebrew spirit. It is probably an echo of Theognis who again and again stresses the necessity of doing "nothing too much" and "going the middle way." "Strive after nothing in excess; the mean is best of all, and thus you will have excellence which is difficult to obtain" (335; cf. 219, 331 f., 401 f., etc.).

In Eccles. 3:12, לעשות טוב is taken to mean "to do good"² rather than "to fare well." Plumptre comments "doing good is in some sense the best way of getting good." This is the meaning of Theognis 573, "Do good and get good."³ The same thought is recognized in the advice of Eccles. 11:1 f., be liberal and benevolent, you will be repaid sooner or later.

Like Koheleth Theognis praises wisdom (cf. Eccles., chaps. 2, 7, and 9; T. 218, 789 f., 876, 1074, 1157). He also prays that while ever keeping his wisdom⁴ he may delight himself in music, dance, and song (789 ff.). Somewhat similarly Koheleth (2:1-9) tells us that he indulged in enjoyment of every kind, but all the time (vs. 9) his wisdom remained with him.

Both, again, can see some good even in the disorders of the world. Theognis remarks that the mean and the noble are proved thereby:

¹ So Rashbam, Hitzig, Ginsburg, etc., with Vulgate and Syriac versions—אֵתֶּרֶךְ כְּכֶם.

² So many commentators, following Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate.

³ εὖ ἐρδων, εὖ πᾶσχε.

⁴ "Prudence," "sound judgment," as in 218, 1074 f.

good are sifted from bad (393 ff., 1105 ff.). And we have Koheleth (3:18), "I said in my heart *it is* on account of the sons of man, that God may sift them," etc.¹

The pagan moralist preaches the manly duty of bravely facing trouble, "What Fate has decreed 'tis impossible to escape; but what Fate has decreed I will suffer without fear" (817 f.; cf. 320, 355 f., 398, 441 ff., 555, 657, 696, etc.). But especially note ll. 1029 ff. and 591-94: "Be patient, my heart, in troubles, even though your sufferings are intolerable; the hearts of base men are too hasty"; "It is right to endure the gifts of the gods to mortals and to readily bear the lot of both (weal and woe); neither in misfortunes be over-much vexed nor in good fortune be suddenly delighted, until you have seen the extreme end." In 7:8 f. Koheleth treats the same thoughts in reverse order: "Better is the end of a thing than its beginning; better the patient of spirit than the haughty of spirit. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry," etc. There is also 7:14 where in regard to God's gifts of good and evil we are advised, "In the day of prosperity be in prosperity and in the day of adversity look upon adversity."² When all is well use your prosperity wisely; be contented and happy (cf. T. 320, 355, 397, 443) and when misfortune comes bear it with courage. Further in 11:6 we have the exhortation: Bravely do your duty day by day; do not falter by reason of the uncertainties attached to all human undertakings and bear all adversity in a becoming spirit.

In common with teachers the world over, anger is regarded as un wisdom. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger lodges in the bosom of fools" (Eccles. 7:9); "Restrain thy mind, let gentleness ever attend thy tongue; the heart of the mean is too hasty" (T. 365 f.); "Do not for slight reason ruin a friend. . . . If one should be angry at the faults of his friends in every instance, never would there be concord and friendship one with another, for faults attend mortals" (T. 323 ff.; cf. 897 ff.). Further, deeds wrought in anger injure the doer: "Nothing is more unrighteous than anger, which harms its possessor by meanly indulging passion" (T. 1223 f.),

¹ Vss. 16 and 18 are closely connected; vs. 17 is an interpolation.

² ביום טובה היה בטוב וביום רעה ראה [וברעה] seems to require ברעה to complete the sentence.

and so probably Eccles. 8:9 which begins an independent sentence.¹ "There is a time when man has power over man to his own² hurt."

Both roundly condemn empty boasting. "Never talk great words in public, for no man knows what a night or day brings to a man" (T. 159 f.): "'Tis not right to swear; 'this will never happen'; for the gods are angry in whose hands lie the issue" (T. 659 f.). Compare Eccles. 10:12 ff.: "the lips of a fool shall swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, and the end of his speech is wicked madness. The fool speaks great³ words, yet man knows not that which shall be; and what shall be after him who can tell him?" Koheleth is referring not merely to talkativeness, but to boastful assertions concerning the unknown future. The fool talks as if it were an open scroll before him. It is a thought found elsewhere in the Old Testament.⁴

It is also the mark of the fool to think that he alone is wise and all other men wrong. "Whoso thinks his neighbour knows nothing, but that he only understands subtle matters, *he* is without sense [ἄφρων], reft of sound mind" (T. 221 f.). "When the fool walks in the way his sense is lacking and he says of everyone,⁵ he is a fool" (Eccles. 10:3). A further characteristic is that the fool attends to other people's affairs more than his own. "Foolish is he who has my mind in safe-keeping but pays no attention to his own private affairs" (439 f.). Similar is the meaning of Eccles. 10:2 in view of the close connection with vs. 3: "The mind of a wise man is at his right hand, but the mind of a fool is at his left." The wise man's attention is in the right place, attending to his own affairs; the fool's is in the wrong place, attending to those of others. In proof of this is the fact that when he goes about his own sense is lacking and he calls everybody else a fool. Note also along with the figure in 10:2 that of 2:14: "the wise man's eyes are in his head" and compare with both the somewhat similar figures in Theognis (1163-64), "In the wise, eyes, tongue, ears and man's mind are naturally in the midst of their breasts."

¹ So Vulgate, Luther, Ginsburg, McNeille, etc.

² So Vulgate, Symmachus, Hitzig, etc.

³ יִרְבֶּה דְּבָרָיו: see Job 34:37 and Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Lexicon*, pp. 915-16.

⁴ Prov. 27:1; Isa. 56:12.

⁵ So Vulgate, Symmachus, Barton, McNeille, etc.

Again, speech without direction is censured; there are times when silence is best. "Speech is wont to bring many false steps to mortals when the judgment is disordered" (T. 1221 f.; cf. Eccles. 10:12 f., also 3:7; 5:2, 3, 6; T. 73, 295, 365, 421 f., 613, 625, 659).¹

Both offer the advice—Be circumspect when you enter the house of God. It behooves, says Theognis, a man whom religious duty brings to the temple at Delphi "to be on his guard and go straighter than compasses, rule and square" (805 f.), while Koheleth similarly advises caution: "Guard thy feet [i.e., keep them straight²] when thou goest to the house of God."

Counsel is given to their readers to keep the peace by yielding to circumstances. "Be adroit in changing from one appearance to another, for wisdom, let me tell you, is better than an unbending front" (T. 217 f., also 1070 f.); "If you are doing well 'tis not meet to change, but to keep quiet; but if things go wrong, keep moving until you have put them right" (303 f.). Compare Eccles. 10:4: "If the anger of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place for soothing quiets great offences."

Moralists of every age have written of wealth. Still the following similarities are worthy of mention. It is not always bestowed by God where most deserved, "nor yet riches to men of understanding" (Eccles. 9:11); "The divine power bestows wealth even on a man altogether bad" (T. 149); "many dunces have wealth" (683; cf. 153, 161, 321, 865). Both are impressed with the insatiability of avarice: "The eye is not satisfied with riches" (Eccles. 4:8); "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver, nor who loves riches with gain: this also is vanity" (Eccles. 5:10); "No limit of wealth has been made manifest to men; for those now amongst us who have most substance are eager to double it; who would satisfy all? Wealth, to be sure, becomes folly to mortals" (T. 227 ff. adapted from Solon); "You could not sate the desire for wealth" (1158; cf. 462). Fortune, too, is very changeable (Eccles. 5:14; 6:2; 9:11 f.; 10:6-7; T. 157, 318, 557, 662 ff.; see, however, 197, where Theognis states that wealth sent by God and gained justly remains steadfast). The acquisition and possession of riches mean

¹ It is an Old Testament thought (Prov. 10:14; 12:13; 18:7; Ps. 64:8; 140:9).

² See Ginsburg, p. 335.

only sorrow and labor (Eccles. 2:18; 4:6, 8; 5:11-13,¹ 17; T. 153, 230, 605, 276). It is of interest to find that both couple together wealth and wisdom: "Wealth and wisdom to mortals are ever unconquerable"² (1157): "Wisdom is good like an inheritance: yea, more excellent is it for them that see the sun. For wisdom is a defence³ even as money is a defence," etc. (Eccles. 7:11 f.). The commonplace⁴ is repeated that no man can take his wealth with him when he dies (Eccles. 2:18; 4:8; 5:15; T. 725 f.). Further, money is a help (Eccles. 7:12; T. 524, 1157); it rules the world and in human eyes is the supreme virtue (Eccles. 10:19; T. 718, 523, 621, 699 f., 904, 929 f., 1117 f., 1157 f.). But wealth can be held too dearly; after all, there are things more valuable: "Better is a handful with quietness than two hands full of toil and striving after wind" (Eccles. 4:6; cf. Prov., 15:16, 17); "I do not long nor pray to be rich, but be it mine to live modestly and find no harm" (T. 1155). Koheleth states that wisdom is better than wealth (7:11 f.) and Theognis, borrowing from Solon, declares that he will not take in exchange the wealth of the base rich for his own excellence, since the latter is ever steadfast and riches are not (315 ff.; cf. 865 f., 719 ff.).

In 915 ff., the Greek teacher tells of a certain rich man who lived sparingly, never allowing himself food fit for a free man and before he had finished (i.e., gained as much wealth as—he desired) he descended to the house of the dead and the chance-comer⁵ received his wealth and so he labored in vain and did not give it to whom a man would wish, i.e., to children of his own. In similar language Koheleth also writes of a rich man, "There is a lone man, without a second, he has neither son nor brother, but there is no end to all his toil, yea, his eye is not sated with wealth. For whom (saith he) am I labouring and depriving myself of good? This also is vanity and an evil task" (4:8). Theognis, too, complains that he has been dispossessed of his wealth and that others hold his flourishing fields

¹ Commentators quote the striking parallel in Xenophon's *Cyrop.* viii. 3, 40.

² ἀμαχώτατον.

³ לָכֶסֶת "protection," "defence."

⁴ Ps. 39:6; 49:10; Job 1:21; Sir. 41:1, etc.

⁵ οὐππιτυχών, evidently he had no blood-heirs.

(1200, 825 f.), while Koheleth tells of a rich man robbed¹ of his means which a stranger² now enjoys (6:1 f.).

They both utter warnings against inordinate desire; unattainable things must not be sought after: "Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire" (Eccles. 6:9); "Never set thy mind on impossibilities; nor long for wealth, of which there is no accomplishment" (T. 461 f.).

Like Theognis, Koheleth can appreciate the virtues of a good wife: "Enjoy life with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy vain life" (9:9).³ "Nothing is sweeter than a good wife" (T. 1225; cf. 1126 ff.). Nevertheless, both lash out against woman apparently under the smart of bitter personal experience (Eccles. 7:26-28; T. 581, 959 f., 459 f., 1368 in B). It is, however, a well-known habit of man to gird at woman.⁴

The phrase תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ ("under the sun"=on the earth) is peculiar in the Old Testament to Koheleth who uses it twenty-nine times. Plumptre and others regard it as the equivalent of the common Greek ὑφ' ἡλίῳ; but Barton thinks it was a phrase characteristic of the period. It may, however, have been suggested by the use in Theognis of ἡέλιος καθορᾷ (168, 616, 850; ἐφορῶσι in 1184). In Theognis 425 ff. we have "Of all things for men-of-earth 'tis best not to be born and not to see the rays of the piercing sun."⁵ Scholars have pointed out the parallel in Eccles. 4:3, "And (I regarded) as better than them both [i.e., dead and living] him which hath never been, who hath not seen the evil work which is done under the sun." Further "to see the sun"="living," is found in Eccles. 6:5; 7:11; 11:7, and in Theognis 1143.⁶ The passage 11:7: "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun,"

¹ So Ewald and others.

² אִישׁ נָכָרִי.

³ So, too, 12:1 if with Graetz, Cheyne, Haupt, etc., we read בִּירֵךְ instead of בִּוּרֵךְ. The emendation, however, is doubtful, though neither grotesque nor unworthy: see *DB* I, 639b.

⁴ See for example, the Greek Florilegium of John Stobaeus LXXIII, Taylor's edition of the Jewish *Pirkē Abōth*, pp. 15 and 137; Latin authors, such as Plautus and Terence, and even English writers as Aytown, Byron, Hill, and Dryden.

⁵ ἐσιδεῖν αὐγὰς ὀξέος ἡελίου.

⁶ Also, however, in Ps. 58:8.

especially reminds us of line 569 where Theognis speaks of death as leaving the delightful light of the sun."¹

Several students see in Eccles. 1:5 a reference to the idea of the chariot of the sun drawn by panting steeds. Others believe such a notion to be un-Hebraic and therefore impossible. Barton accepts the idea here, but his and Haupt's contention from II Kings 23:11, that the Israelites were familiar with it is far from proved.² It is interesting to note that the idea is found in Theognis 997.

Koheleth is also conscious of being superior to others in wisdom and knowledge (1:16; 2:15; 12:9 ff.); and in giving expression to it he but follows Theognis who claims "signal knowledge of wisdom" (769 f.); that none of the unwise can imitate him (370) and that when compared with others he has a superior power of mind (4:18; cf. 447, 755, 945). Theognis, again, says that "Mere opinion is a great bane to men; experience is best" (571 f., 1104a, b) and Koheleth acts fully in the spirit of the line (chaps. 1, 2; 3:10, 16, 22; 4:1, 4, 7, 15; 5:13, 18; 7:25; 8:9, and *passim*). Neither gives expression to "mere opinions"; in both we have summed up the results of solid reflection upon lives full of most varied experiences.

The lines in Theognis 769 ff. merit special attention. "'Tis meet that the servant and messenger of the Muses if he has any signal knowledge of wisdom³ should not begrudge it, no, he must seek after (*μῶσθαι*) some things, present some (*δευνύειν*) and compose (*ποιεῖν*) others; to what profit is his sole knowledge?" Here we have the Greek's own view of his function as a poet. Inasmuch as he was intellectually superior to other men he did not keep his wisdom to himself but taught it; he sought out the writings and thoughts of others and such as he had tested and approved or even modified were presented along with his own original work.⁴ With these lines compare Eccles. 12:9-10. In view of 1:16 and 2:15 there is no reason to suspect these verses on the ground that the self-praise

¹ Most commentators quote also the similar expression in Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1219: ἡδὺ γὰρ τὸ φῶς λεύσσειν.

² See *DB*, IV, 628-29.

³ εἴ τι περισσὸν εἰδείη σοφίης.

⁴ See Harrison, *Studies in Theognis* and Allen in *Classical Review*, XIX, 389.

is unlike Koheleth,¹ while the uncommon language may be due to his having in mind the passage in Theognis. "And because Koheleth was superior in wisdom² he taught the people knowledge; yea, he tested and made search and set in order many proverbs. Koheleth sought to find words of fact³ and he wrote uprightly words of truth." Compare this passage with that of Theognis. In both the possession of superior wisdom is felt to carry with it the responsibility of teaching it. Then follows the exposition of their methods of work. Both sought out⁴ the writings of others and such thoughts as were tested and approved they presented. But neither was merely a literary borrower; their own experience and observation furnished much of the truth they taught. Theognis composed (*ποιεῖν*) some things of his own while Koheleth sought to find facts and wrote honestly the truth as he saw it. The similarity between the two passages is striking.

Comparison of the two books has led the present writer to the conclusion that Koheleth knew the work that went under the name of Theognis, whether it came from the pen of Theognis himself or is, as many think, a compilation. He knew it so well that often he reproduces the thought and sometimes even echoes the language.⁵ True, there are differences; for in spite of his un-Hebraic lack of religious warmth Koheleth was, after all, a Jewish theist and this kept him within due limits. But he was a mere thinker with nothing of that sense of Divine fellowship which ever characterized the Old Testament saint. A Greek scholar, he must have been acquainted with Theognis "the Greek moralist par excellence," and since his

¹ So Plumptre and Barton.

² It is difficult not to think that יָחַד in vs. 9 was very early misplaced by a scribe who confounded it with the one in vs. 12 a little further down and that it belongs to חָכֶם. The Targum seems to have understood יָחַד מְכַל with חָכֶם; the Septuagint reads strangely καὶ περισσὸν ὅτι ἐγένετο Ἐκκλησιαστῆς σοφός, ὅτι ἐδίδαξεν κ.τ.λ. and the Vulgate gives "Cumque esset sapientissimus Ecclesiastes, docuit populum," etc. Perhaps the original text was read: "וְשִׁיחָה קָהֵלַת חָכֶם עַד-יָחַד (or) לְמַד."

³ So Marshall taking חֵפֶץ="matter" "business," as several times elsewhere in Koheleth (3:1, 17; 5:7; 8:6).

⁴ Cf. Ben Sira 39:1 ff.

⁵ It is noteworthy that Professor D. S. Margoliouth in his article on "Ecclesiastes" in the *Jewish Enc.* thinks it possible that Ecclesiastes is an adaptation of a work in some other language.

own survey of life had led him to somewhat similar conclusions it was but natural that in writing down the results of his own reflections he should be guided by his knowledge of the opinions of the Greek teacher. Of course, some of the ideas are not peculiar to these writers; sages everywhere and at all times have given expression to them; and the fact that similar types of mind may produce similar ideas quite independently, must not be forgotten; nevertheless, the best explanation of the facts seems to be found in some connection between the two writings. At any rate, whether there is a connection or not the similarities are of interest to the Bible student.